

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-02

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04

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R 221015Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO ASECSTATE WASHDC 3575

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

UNCLAS TEHRAN 9322

DEPARTMENT PASS USDOC WASHDC

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: BEXP, EIND, IR

SUBJ: ANTI-PROFITEERING DRIVE: MINISTER OF COMMERCE MEETS WITH
BUSINESSMEN

REF: TEHRAN 8992 OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1975

1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE KAYHAN OF SEPTEMBER 21 REPORTS A MEETING ON
SEPTEMBER 20 BETWEEN MINISTER OF COMMERCE MAHDAVI AND A GROUP OF
LEADING IRANIAN BUSINESSMEN AND IMPORTERS. THE MEETING, APPARENTLY
UNCLASSIFIED

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OF AN INFORMAL NATURE, TOOK PLACE AT THE IRANIAN CHAMBER OF COM-
MERCE, INDUSTRIES AND MINES.

2. THE MINISTER'S APPROACH TO THE BUSINESSMEN WAS REPORTEDLY ONE

OF REASONABLENESS AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS. HE TOLD THE BUSINESSMEN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT PROFIT MARGINS AND PRICING POLICIES BUT THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF "FAIR" PRICING WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. ALLUDING TO WIDESPREAD REPORTS CIRCULATING IN TEHRAN THAT SHORTAGES WOULD BEGIN TO APPEAR WITHIN A FEW MONTHS' TIME, THE MINISTER NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD ITSELF "DIRECTLY IMPORT GOODS WHEREVER NECESSARY." HE WENT ON TO ADD, HOWEVER, THAT HE PREFERRED THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTINUE AS THE PRINCIPAL VEHICLE FOR IRANIAN IMPORTS: "THE PRIVATE SECTOR WORKS BETTER THAN WE DO; IT IS MORE EFFICIENT AND GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE MANPOWER."

3. THE MINISTER ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE PRICE CONTROL CENTER EVIDENTLY MADE ERRORS IN SETTING THE PRICES OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS NO SIMPLE TASK TO PRICE 20,000 ITEMS. FOR THIS REASON THE COOPERATION OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS ESSENTIAL. "MISTAKES WILL BE MADE BUT THESE CAN BE RESOLVED." REFERRING TO THE 15 PERCENT PROFIT MARGIN ALLOWED TO IMPORTERS, MAHDAVI SAID THAT IN SOME INSTANCES THIS PERCENTAGE COULD BE RECONSIDERED.

HELMS

UNCLASSIFIED

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